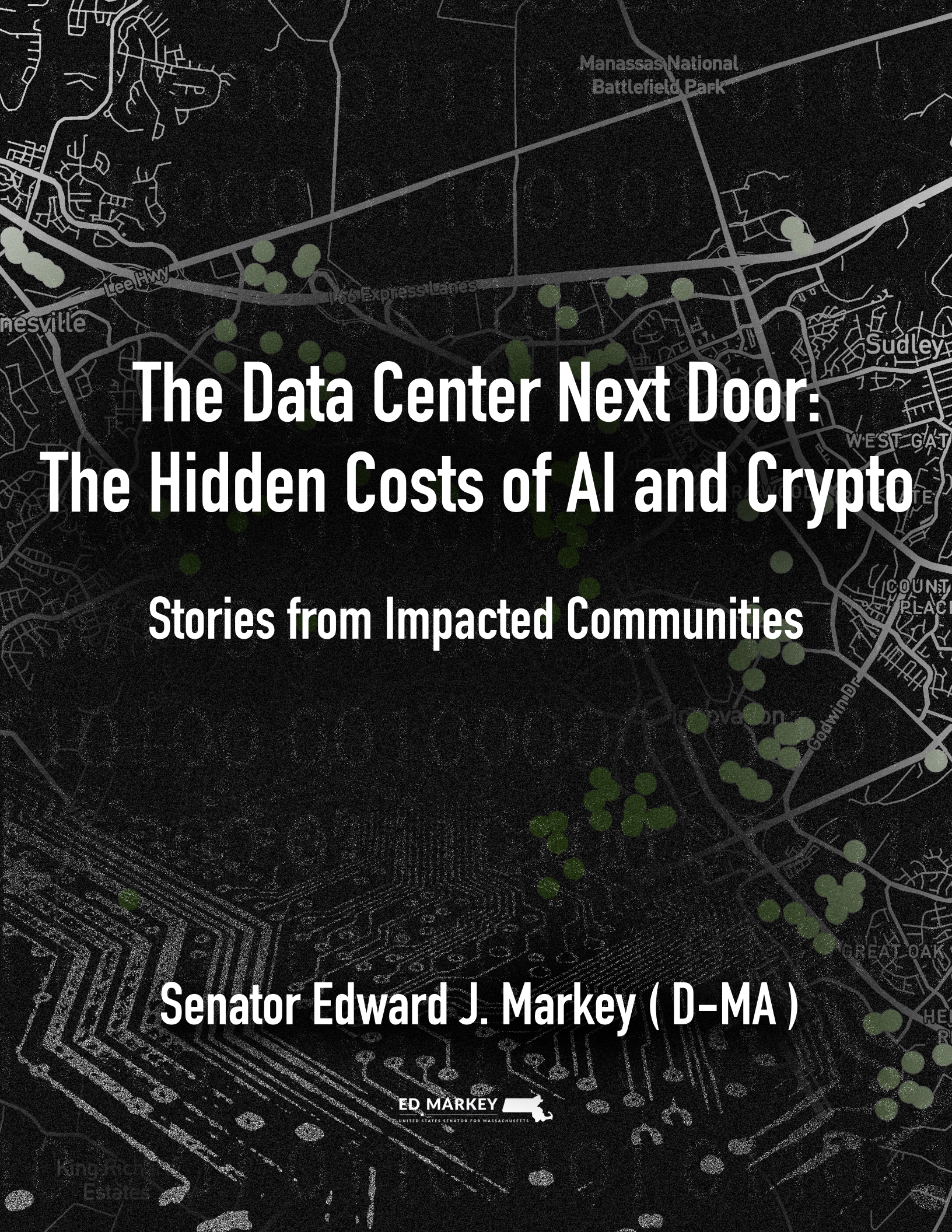


The Data Center Next Door: The Hidden Costs of AI and Crypto

Stories from Impacted Communities

Senator Edward J. Markey (D-MA)

ED MARKEY
UNITED STATES SENATOR FOR MASSACHUSETTS

Dear Reader,

Advances in technology can bring great convenience and efficiency to our lives. Just like the internet and the smartphone did, artificial intelligence (AI) is poised to fundamentally transform the way we communicate, work, and interact with the world.

But as we saw with technological revolutions of the past, governments can easily fail to recognize and respond to serious dangers that emerging technologies can pose. With AI and cryptocurrency mining, many of the dangers come from the massive, resource-intensive data centers required to power these industries. Data centers need huge amounts of electricity and water to operate. This demand stresses an already-burdened electric grid and taxes finite water resources on which households, farms, and other businesses across the country rely.

The harms from the rapid growth of data center infrastructure and the rise of cryptocurrency are both economic and environmental: energy costs for American households are rising and pollution is hurting neighboring communities, including constant noise pollution that disrupts and prevents sleep. But construction of new data centers continues unabated, with no comprehensive regulations or policies in place to protect those suffering immediate and long-term damage.

The Trump administration has gone full throttle on data centers, seemingly willing to undermine public health, energy affordability, the climate, and environment, all to prop up Big Tech's infrastructure network. In just the last six months, President Trump has signed or announced executive orders to restart coal-fired power plants, site data centers on federal lands, and undermine federal environmental protection laws. Lawmakers at all levels of government must ensure that the Trump administration's no-holds-barred approach to data center construction does not come at the cost of our health and welfare.

Data centers are expected to drive record-high energy use in the United States over the next two years and could increase the growth in national power demand by as much as five times by 2030. At the end of the decade, data processing is expected to consume more electricity in the United States than all energy-intensive manufacturing combined, including more than the total demand from aluminum, steel, cement, and chemical manufacturing. This skyrocketing demand is going to cause cataclysmic changes to our energy grid—to prices, reliability, and pollution—and exponentially impact our land, water, air, and communities. We owe it to our neighbors and our planet to understand what the coming surge in data center development will do and to take action in response.

The stories told here help us grow that understanding—these are stories that come from people all across the country who are already seeing and feeling the consequences in their communities. From the streets of Memphis to the plains of Texas, people are feeling big impacts from Big Tech, but they're not backing down

In this critical policy moment, we hope this storybook will help lawmakers, media, and other stakeholders understand how data center development affects communities, public health, and the environment. Together, we can build the right tools to make sure our cities, towns, energy grid, and environment can survive, grow, and advance alongside technology, without being sacrificed to it.


MARYLAND
Columbia
Annapolis
Washington
Waldorf
Harrisonburg
Staunton
Charlottesville
VIRGINIA
Richmond
Lynchburg
Newport News
Virginia
Danville
Durham
Wilson
VIRGINIA

I live in Mountain City, Tennessee, where CleanSpark has proposed a 30MW bitcoin mining facility on a 50-acre parcel zoned for businesses—not industrial energy users. Even before operations begin, the impact has been immense—and the entire burden of due diligence has fallen on residents who were never informed, consulted, or protected. . . . Residents have no neutral advisor, no ethics enforcement, and no independent oversight. We're not fighting technology—we're pleading for transparency and accountability in a town that's been left defenseless.

— Lori, Mountain City, TN

I used to hike at T. O. Fuller state park. It's the only state park in the city of Memphis. It used to be a place where Memphians could go to hike, get fresh air, be in nature. Now, if you want to hike there you are going to be exposed to air pollution from Elon Musks artificial intelligence super computer. Now, all of the wildlife living in that state park will be exposed to toxic chemicals in the air. Our parks and surrounding neighborhoods will never be the same. The poison in the air is coming from a corporation that has not sought approval from the public. So a few can have champagne, everyone else will be exposed to toxic chemicals. If it was so safe to live by the facility, why does Elon not live in Memphis? Why should Memphis be polluted and poisoned?

— Rachel, Memphis, TN

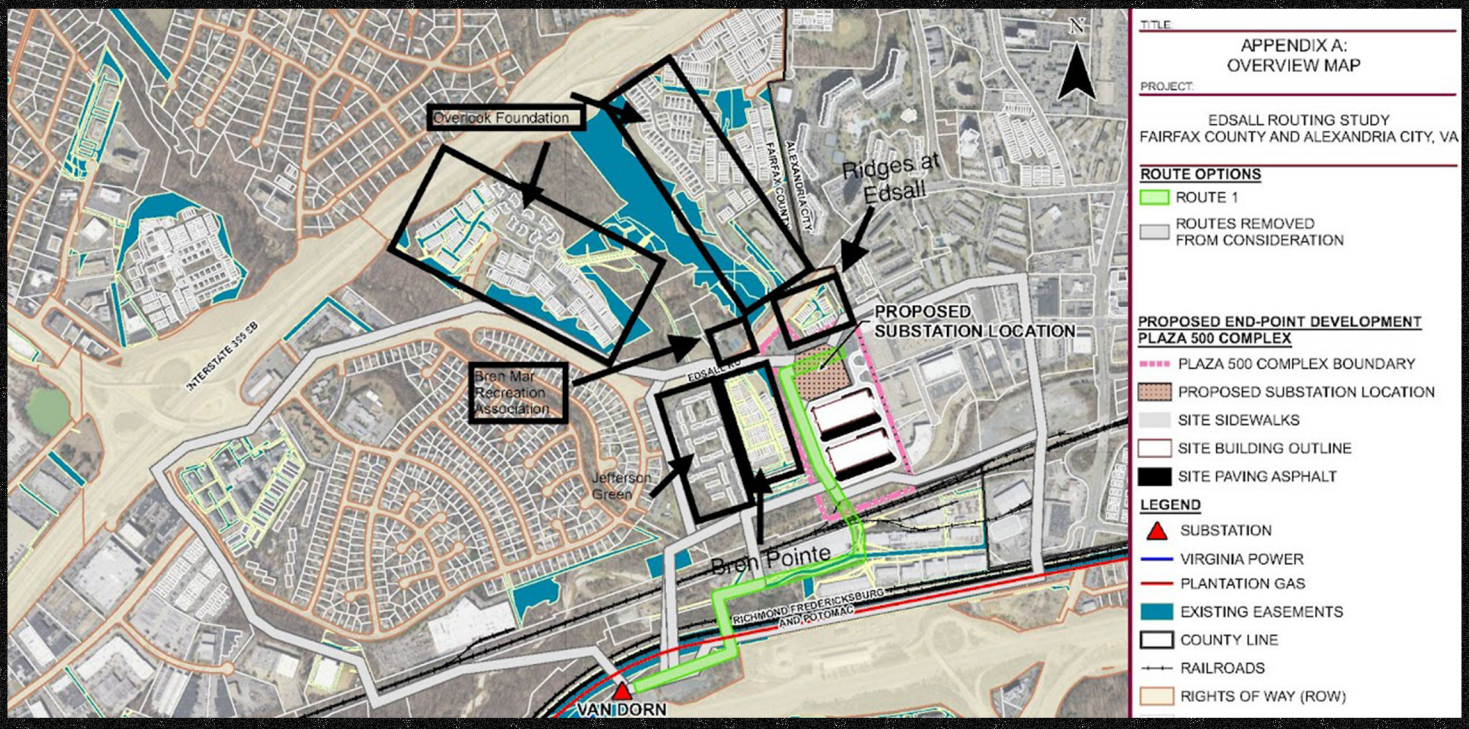
When I first heard about XAI it'd basically already been built which blindsided myself and other residents of Memphis. I may not personally live in that neighborhood, but I have friends from there whose families have a history of health problems due to the pollution that's already been in that area for decades. The last thing anyone needs is dirtier air. I'm also someone who travels to different areas of Memphis as an entertainer. I do perform outdoors for gatherings and I can tell you that the neighborhood by XAI stinks. I can also tell you how much hotter summers have gotten and it's affected my ability to perform as many daytime events. I actually got heat sickness twice last year after over a decade of performing professionally. I'm worried if Xai is allowed to operate as it intends to, that we will see an explosion in the number of data centers which would inevitably lead to more damage of our climate and everyone's health.

— Hannah, Memphis, TN

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Since summer 2022, my diverse community of Bren Mar has been under attack by a data center developer and Dominion Energy to seek approval to build a massive 466,000 sq. ft. data center the size of 7 football fields, a 5-acre electrical substation and 100 ft. transmission lines in the middle of three residential communities less than 60 feet from residents. [...] The energy infrastructure needed for this project would go directly through two sensitive resource areas and across two streams that are in urgent need of repair and would be forever blocked from future restoration efforts. It's unacceptable that this project is even being considered right under the nose of Congress and just miles from the nation's capitol in Alexandria, VA.”

– Tyler, Alexandria, VA



Proposed Route of Transmission Line and Substation. Screenshot from Save Bren Mar

A critical piece of land within a national park's legislative boundary is at risk of being lost to data center development. . . . The landowner has expressed possible interest in selling the land, but because AI is driving so much demand, land prices are soaring, with some parcels reaching up to $2 million per acre! This has made it nearly impossible for conservation groups and even the federal government to compete financially to preserve it. Its development would degrade vital natural resources and harm a beloved national park that provides mental, physical, and environmental benefits to millions in the D.C. region.

— Ashley, Woodbridge, VA

The noise was impacting sleep and impairing the use of back yards for people and pets. It could be heard and felt. I have more than 3 years of daily measurements which demonstrate our suffering. I am a resident member of the PWC data center advisory group working on a new Noise Ordinance which I hope will help my community. I believe the first problem is siting, data centers should not be allowed to be built near residential, schools, health facilities or parks. The second is that these buildings need to be designed to rigorously limit noise and environmental impact. Legislation is the only way we can get this under control as the industry will not do any of this voluntarily.

— Dale, Manassas, VA

Since, moving here we have done nothing but try to fight all the these rezoning – to no avail on the data centers. I no longer feel any peace living here as the generators from True North, particularly in the summer months, kick in, the sound is like a tractor trailer running full throttle in my driveway. In the colder months, when i look into the sky, I see huge white plumes of smoke from the electrical plant. . . . I can't escape the horror. Honestly, if we had known this was to pass, we would not have chosen this county to live in. It has been heart breaking to turn rural areas into industrial areas. I cannot leave my house without passing hundreds of trucks everyday, destroying what was once woods and harmony to build industry and it continues as the board keeps approving data centers in transitional zones and not housing with no regard for all the implications of power and energy these require. It is has deeply affected my quality for life for the worse and I will always harbor resentment and sadness from living in the data center capitol.

— Vivian, Leesburg, VA

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Virginia gives away billions in tax incentives for data centers that supply the world with data, not just Virginians, and are turning our beautiful Virginia into an ugly industrial state. We underfund our schools and our communities . . .

yet we eagerly give away our land to massive buildings and their associated substations and transmission lines, without regard to air and noise pollution, water quality/consumption, or the impacts to the environment. The tallest data center, 110’, will be built near our Pleasant Valley community, with hundreds of gallons of diesel stored within feet of Cub Run stream.

The Meadows of Chantilly Mobile home community will have a 75’ tall massive data center built with the more polluting and noisy Tier 2 diesel generators only 50 feet from their residential lots.”

– Cynthia, Chantilly, VA

Back in October 2024, Balico proposed a large (700+ acre) data center campus and gas-fired power plant in my neighborhood. We fought it for six months. This was no place to put this right down in the middle of farms and residences, just outside the town of Chatham, the county seat. I own a small business and it would have stopped my business. After six months of stress and much concern and opposition, the Board of Supervisors for Pittsylvania County voted it down at a meeting where close to 500 people were in attendance, the vast majority opposed. Our opposition was based on destruction of community, few real jobs, air pollution, water usage, impact on roads, noise pollution, threat to wildlife, natural waterways affected, etc.

—Jennifer, Chatham, VA

My name is Vicky and I've worked and lived in Loudoun County for the last 25 years. When I purchased my home 20 years ago, it was the biggest investment of my life. I love the forest behind my house and the animals that live along Broad Run River. This is where I live with my family and where I plan to retire.Since data centers started coming to Ashburn 14 years ago, we've lost thousands of trees and displaced wildlife for cold, ugly concrete buildings and giant power lines. I understand the county need growth and job creations, but there's balance between money and quality of life.

— Vicky, Ashburn, VA

There is a great blue heron Rookery (Colony) on its way to being officially recognized by the Department of Environmental Quality and already recognized and monitored by Fairfax County that will be directly threatened by building a data center on the intended plot of land. There are more than 20 nests and they are thriving any disturbance to this delicate Wetlands ecosystem along Cub Run stream will not only be detrimental to the birds and all other matter of Flora and Fauna in the area but to my neighbors and I since they propose currently a 10-story data center to be built on in this area.

— Michael, Chantilly, VA

This data center is not connected to the grid, and since it became operational in early 2025, it relies on 8 on-site natural gas turbines for its power. My neighbors and I find the noise pollution from these generators to be intolerable. Some in our communities complain that on certain nights they have trouble sleeping. When its backup diesel generators are turned on the smoke is unbelievable and the noise even louder. Neighbors have told me that real estate agents are probably finding prospective buyers for home tours in the neighborhood because of the proximity to this data center. . . . I and others have monitored the decibel levels, which have ranged from around 60 to 90, both near the data center and at our homes. The Center is within a couple of hundred yards of my home.

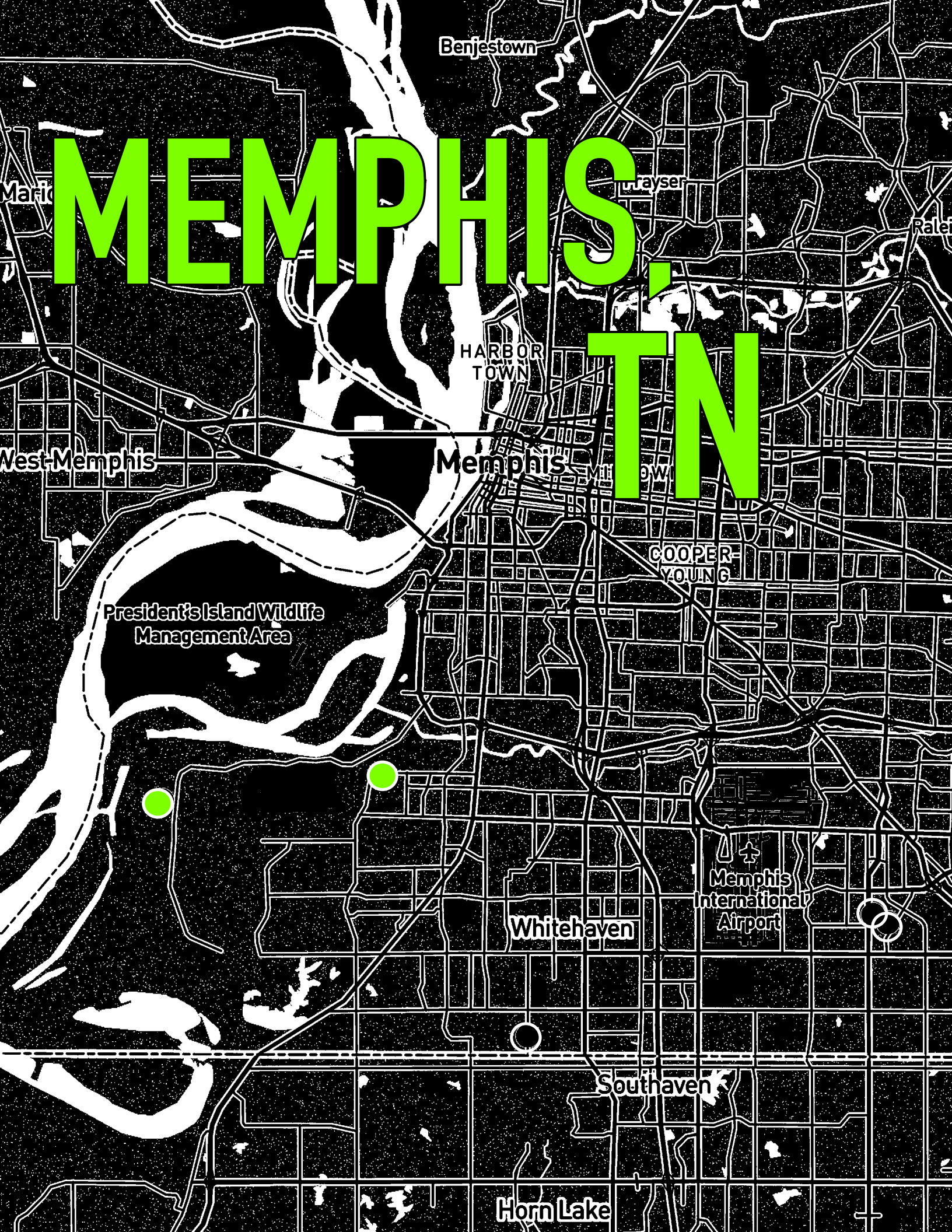
— Gregory, Sterling, VA

This land surrounding my neighborhood for almost 30 years was designated agricultural. The zoning change and the approval of up to 11 massive (heavy industrial) data centers was done during the end of COVID. Given the state of the world most residents had no idea what was happening. . . . Our opposition was around the impact to our quality of life as the noise from data centers is a health hazard; concerns with power and water and just down to the fact that heavy industrial doesn't belong dropped in the middle of neighborhoods, next to schools and adversely impacts the largest investment your make our homes and quality of life. The toll this has taken on me and my family is immeasurable and now after 30 years of enjoying my home I am being forced to move to ensure my quality of life.

— Donna, Bristow, VA

My locality, Henrico County, decided to go all in on courting data centers around 2017. They drastically dropped the tax rate, upped incentives, and carved out huge amounts of land, all in the same magisterial district, in the, in the same area. Varina's burden, Henrico County's gain. The disgusting part about this is that our community in Varina is already being crushed under the weight of environmental burdens. There are multiple landfills, multiple power plants, dozens of factories, an airport, and every single environmental pollution scandal in Henrico County in the last generation has been here in Varina. PFAS in the groundwater, ethylene oxide in the air, leaking landfills with toxic sludge, all right here. Now we add to that the output of thousands of diesel generators, being run increasingly often as Virginia exceeds its power grid, and the emissions from a new gas plant being built across the river to fuel data center energy demands.

— Gray, Henrico, VA


MEMPHIS, TN
Benjestown
HARBOR TOWN
West Memphis
Memphis
COOPER YOUNG
President's Island Wildlife Management Area
Memphis International Airport
Whitehaven
Southaven
Horn Lake

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In 2024 when we first began to hear talk of Elon Musk locally, he was already operating in our city where a population of 62 percent of African Americans are citizens. In light of the stated mindset and historical actions of Elon, the creator and owner of xAI, I could not see any benefit he could or would bring to Memphis or the greatest of Memphians.

The recent curtailment request made by our public utility service provider was still very fresh in our minds therefore, this action was like a slap in the face. . . . Then there is the compounded impact on decades and decades of environmental abuse and damage caused by industrial pollution from TVA, Valero, and Nucor Steel. xAI was adding icing on the cake! Continued inhumane behavior and ungodly disregard for African American lives and property.

Lives and livelihoods over supposed technological advancements, monetary greed and power!”

— Glenda, Memphis, TN

“In June 2024, Memphis residents learned about xAI, the world's largest super computer during a press conference that would be located in 38109, a majority Black community in Southwest Memphis. . . . xAI deployed 15 methane gas turbines with no air permit. For nearly a year, methane gas turbines operated emitting air toxins such as NOx and formaldehyde. This frontline community already has significant legacy pollution as at least 17 other industries contribute to the overall poor air quality. Just this year, the American Lung Association's State of the Air report rated Shelby County with an "F". Shelby County has also been designated by EPA for non-attainment. Despite the cumulative impacts, environmental racism, and legacy pollution, the Shelby County Health Department approved the air permits with no consideration for the 100's and 100's of public comments from concerned Memphians. Our elected officials and agencies cowered to industry and prioritized profit over people. My father died a week before Christmas in 2022 in 38109 and his mother—my last living grandparent, died 6 months later from chronic respiratory disease. I fear many more lives may be at risk as industry keeps using Black communities like 38109 for experimentation and exploitation.”

— LaTricea, Memphis, TN

I live in Mountain City, Tennessee, where CleanSpark has proposed a 30MW bitcoin mining facility on a 50-acre parcel zoned for businesses—not industrial energy users. Even before operations begin, the impact has been immense—and the entire burden of due diligence has fallen on residents who were never informed, consulted, or protected. . . . Residents have no neutral advisor, no ethics enforcement, and no independent oversight. We're not fighting technology—we're pleading for transparency and accountability in a town that's been left defenseless.

— Lori, Mountain City, TN

I used to hike at T. O. Fuller state park. It's the only state park in the city of Memphis. It used to be a place where Memphians could go to hike, get fresh air, be in nature. Now, if you want to hike there you are going to be exposed to air pollution from Elon Musks artificial intelligence super computer. Now, all of the wildlife living in that state park will be exposed to toxic chemicals in the air. Our parks and surrounding neighborhoods will never be the same. The poison in the air is coming from a corporation that has not sought approval from the public. So a few can have champagne, everyone else will be exposed to toxic chemicals. If it was so safe to live by the facility, why does Elon not live in Memphis? Why should Memphis be polluted and poisoned?

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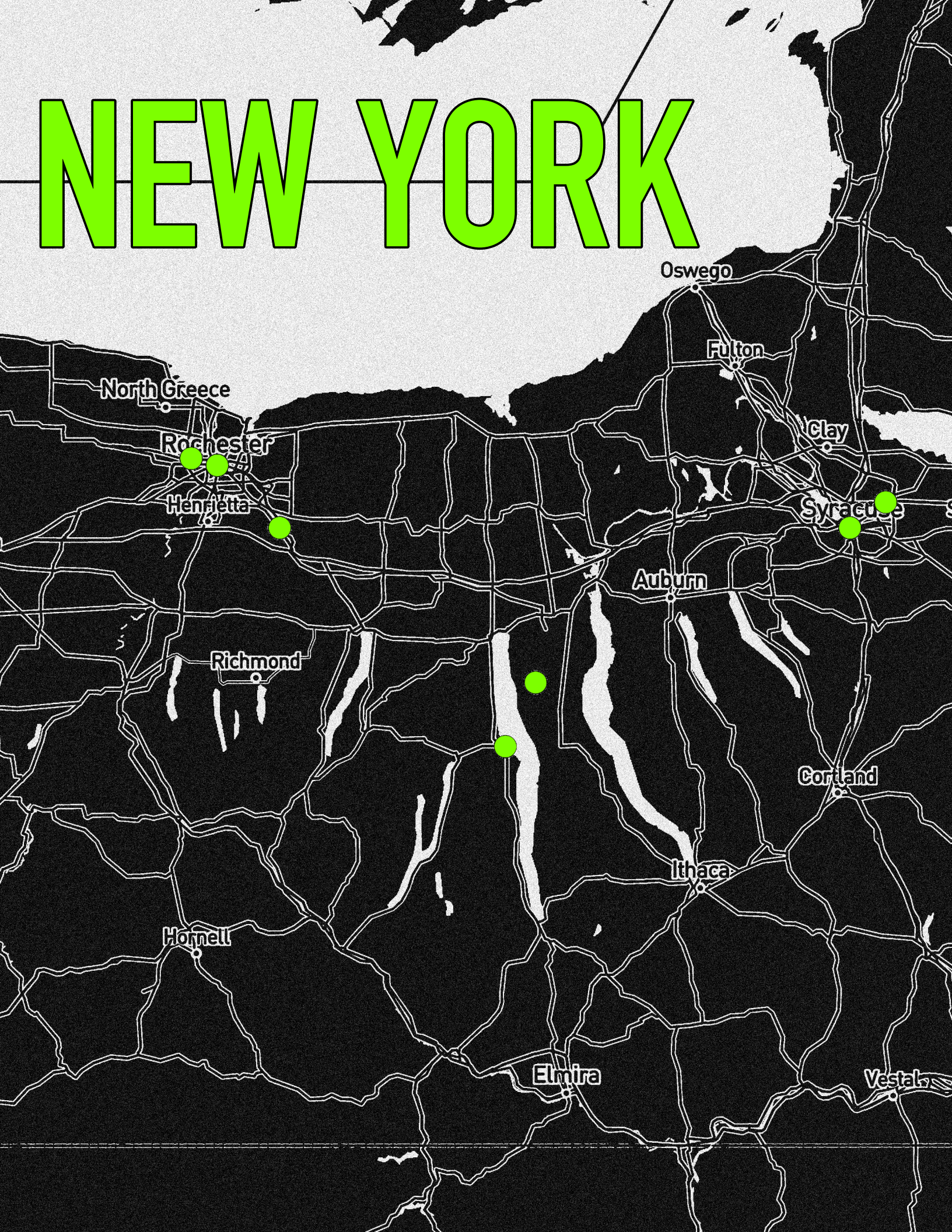
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— Hannah, Memphis, TN

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A little over a year ago, the City of Memphis announced that Elon Musk's xAI would be coming to Memphis. Memphis, and especially the historically Black neighborhood of Boxtown, has been inundated with industrial pollution for decades. So, when this new data center project was announced with no public forum and no transparency about how they would be powering this facility, we were immediately alarmed. Since then, xAI has illegally operated at least 35 combustion turbines without Clean Air Act permits, producing between 1200-2000 tons of Nitrogen Oxides per year (Southern Environmental Law Center). This makes xAI the single largest polluter of NOx in Memphis, even more than our airport, which only worsens Memphis' existing smog concerns. They are moving faster than legal regulations can be put in place and they aren't slowing down anytime soon. For them this is an arms race for AI innovation and we are just their collateral damage. These facilities are placed extremely close to people's homes, schools, and religious institutions. I organize with a student-lead movement from the University of Memphis (called Tigers Against Pollution), and we have been fighting tirelessly for the past several months to push for strict regulation on data centers in our city, so we don't have to deal with this deadly industry in our town anymore.”

— Pierce, Memphis, TN


NEW YORK
Oswego
Fulton
North Greece
Clay
Rochester
Henrietta
Syracuse
Auburn
Richmond
Cortland
Ithaca
Hornell
Elmira
Vestal

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The Greenidge power plant, a once-shuttered coal-fired facility in upstate NY, was revived as a gas-fired plant to serve as a "peaker plant" for high-demand periods. However, it became unprofitable, leading to the installation of Bitcoin mining machines, which increased power consumption by 700%, enough to power over 90,000 homes. The community was misled with promises of jobs and tax revenue that never materialized.

Greenidge is permitted to withdraw 139 million gallons of water daily from Seneca Lake, a drinking water source for 100,000 people- returning it at up to 108°F, harming fish and potentially causing toxic algal blooms. The noise from the plant disrupts the peaceful quality of life for nearby residents. Emissions have increased yearly, impacting the climate and local environment. Toxins like formaldehyde and benzene rain down on area farms, vineyards, and homes. Before Greenidge's acquisition, the plant was inactive, with no emissions or pollution.

Despite being denied a state-required air permit three years ago for violating New York's Climate Law, Greenidge continues to operate by exploiting legal loopholes. This ongoing operation harms the region's air, water, and economy. The situation highlights the broader issue of proof-of-work cryptomining, which exacerbates the climate crisis by burning fossil fuels to generate virtual currency."

– Yvonne, Watkins Glen, NY

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Having a house on Seneca Lake, less than a mile from the Greenidge power plant, I often kayak and have found the water temperature at the mouth of the Keuka Outlet to be 90 plus degrees when the lake temperature at my dock is in the mid 70s. This is due to the power plant discharging water up to 108 degrees into the Keuka Outlet. The power plant's main function is to power a behind the meter proof of work bitcoin operation. They have also been operation for three years without an approved air permit, which was denied by the NY DEC. By the companies own admission, their air admissions were 5 times the permitted levels.

The energy intensive bitcoin operations continue to pollute our air, water and environment(noise). They also produce a tremendous amount of Ewaste. NY DEC has issued a draft General Environmental Impact Statement which clearly cites the environmental impacts of proof of work crypto currency. These impacts are occurring in every state where there is a proof of work crypto currency operation.

Requiring proof of work crypto mining operations to pay residential utility rates would encourage the operations to change to proof of stake and utilize/waste 99% less energy.”

— Winton, Rochester and Dresden, NY

I live 1 mile from Greenidge bit coin power plant in Dresden NY. Since this facility began startup I've heard a constant humming on the waterfront. It is especially loud in the evening and sometimes sounds like I'm near an airport tarmac. The blue green algae has been horrible and the fish population has been severely impacted due to t[h]ermal water release. I've never experienced the algae until the past few years and I've owned my home for 25 years. Fish used to use my waterfront as a nursery and now nothing is laying eggs not even the bullheads. Temperature of water, algae and noise(air pollution) are ruining beautiful Seneca lake.

— Lynn, Dresden, NY

We live less than two miles from the crypto power plant which produces water, air, and noise pollution by mining crypto currency. Absolutely no benefit.

— Anonymous, Dresden, NY

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The energy intensive bitcoin operations continue to pollute our air, water and environment. And there is harmful noise pollution as well. They also produce a tremendous amount of Ewaste. . . .

We must find ways to stop this before it is too late. Our health and our planet's health depend on our success.

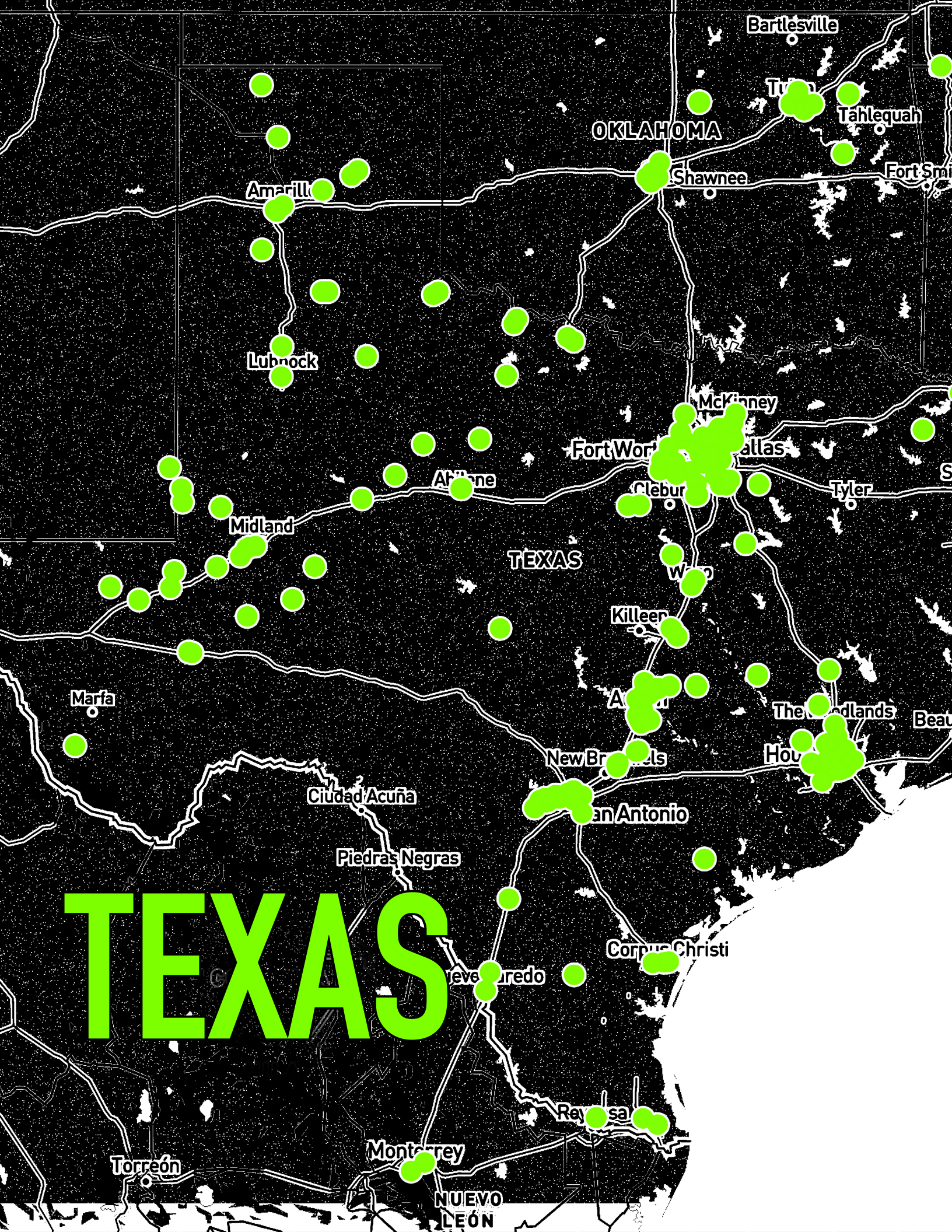
— Abi, Dresden, NY

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This massive amount of computers used for crypto mining require a lot of fans to cool the computers which creates a very loud and constant noise that can be described as jet planes revving their engines on the tarmac waiting to take off. The sound is a constant loud humming noise that is clearly to loud for humans to live next to. My home is about 3/4 of a mile from this plant and the noise is so loud that it forces me out of my own backyard making me a prisoner in my own home. But it doesn't stop there, the noise penetrates the walls of the house which face this plant. This effects my ability to fall asleep at night causing sleep deprivation issues. This sound effects the family dog, he would like to spend time in the backyard but now he wants to come back in right away after doing his business. . . .

They are polluting the air we breathe, they are consuming massive amounts of electricity, they are pouring thousands of heated water back into our sewer system daily. Where does it stop. . . . I am a simple person who is trying to enjoy his retirement in a peaceful environment. I care about the health and well being of this community as well as my own family. For those of us close enough to hear this constant noise , we are pleading for the quality of our lives to be restored to the days of no Digi Power X. Help us enjoy the simple pleasure of enjoying a grill cooked dinner in the privacy of our own backyard and not be subject to being prisoners in our own home, ask yourself, ‘Where does it stop’”

— Mark, North Tonawanda, NY


TEXAS
Bartlesville
Tahlequah
OKLAHOMA
Shawnee
Amarillo
Lubbock
McKinney
Fort Worth
Dallas
Abilene
Cleburne
Tyler
Midland
TEXAS
Killeen
Marfa
The Woodlands
New Braunfels
Houston
Ciudad Acuña
San Antonio
Piedras Negras
Corpus Christi
Nuevo Laredo
Reynosa
Monterrey
Torreón
NUEVO LEÓN

I had to move out of Navarro county & Texas to escape the coming economic & environmental collapse that bitcoin mining will bring to the state. Riot Platforms snuck into Navarro county, undermined overwhelming public opposition, extorted local politicians, and lied to the public the entire time. . . .

They use more water than the actual manufacturing & iron factories in the county. They produce nothing, but got about six million dollars in property tax abatements. Everyone's energy AND WATER bills have already gone up. And now, the "mine" is starting to make noise.

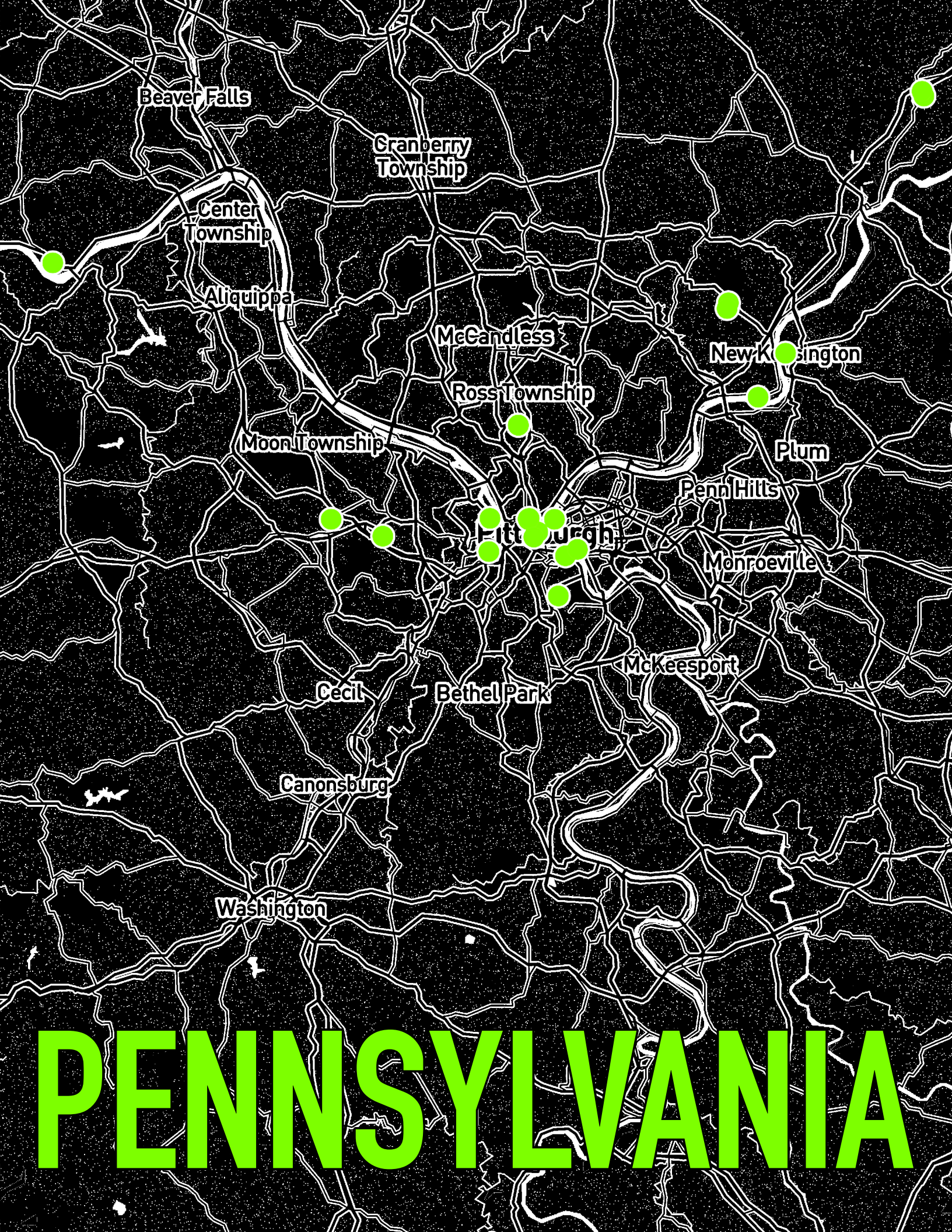
— Jackie, New Lebanon, NY, and formerly Corsicana, TX

We have had horrendous noise pollution invading our properties and inside of our homes for almost 2 years. The state of Texas has done nothing to protect communities from this harm. This are has lost their health, property value, and well being in a massive way. Look at Time Magazine and their articles on this atrocity. This is a real and never ending harm that the people here are forced to endure.

— Cheryl, Granbury, TX

As an organizer in Austin, I've been working with the Hornsby Bend community to fight for access to clean and affordable water, which they still do not have. . . . Central Texas is already in an ongoing drought so how is it ok that we continue to give corporations access to more and more water while working class communities don't even have clean drinking water? The Trump administration also announced $500B investment to build AI data centers in Texas which is going to accelerate environmental pollution & the climate crisis. The recent flash floods that killed over 130 people is just one example of the climate crisis, and as more AI centers use up water causing drought conditions to prevail, the low soil moisture and intense hurricane season will combine to create ideal flood conditions.

— Alexia, Austin, TX


Beaver Falls
Cranberry Township
Center Township
Aliquippa
McCandless
Ross Township
Moon Township
Plum
Penn Hills
Monroeville
McKeesport
Cecil
Bethel Park
Canonsburg
Washington
PENNSYLVANIA

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I live 40 minutes south of Pittsburgh in Washington county the most heavily fraud county in our state. Our home is completely encompass by Oil & Gas activities. approximately 34 Wells in a 1 to 3 mile radius encompass our home along with pipelines, compressor stations, diesel fracking trucks traffic carrying water, sand, residual waste. I'll drive by our house on a daily basis. Not to mention the municipal dumps that they are allowed to dump fracking waste into polluting our water and our air. . . .

Southwestern Pennsylvania has the highest rates of Ewing sarcoma in a five county radius. Nationwide, there's something like 230 cases and we have 69 here. Along with other cancers and studies that were performed here in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Our children have a one in six time chance of developing leukemia and lymphoma along with exasperated asthma due to the Oil & Gas industry. We had to install inside air filters and water filtration systems to protect ourselves. . . . My children develop rashes from the water. And we have public water. Our public water every quarter is above total trihalomethanes, this year has been above radiation levels and lead levels.

Solar and green energy could power the AI centers. But that won't be the case since Oil & Gas is here. There's always been a way to do this better and correctly, but our legislators and government listen to industry rather than the people."

— Lauren, Harrison City, PA

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The country, the world and now Beaver County are in the early stages of proliferation of AI and data centers. As a resident in Beaver County, the health impacts from air and water quality issues from the Shell Polymers Plant already are a burden for our Environmental Justice zones, people with health complications, the elderly, and frankly those in decent health. There was no consultation with residents before the decision was made to proceed with this industry.

1.The Primary Beneficiaries are Fossil Fuel Producers

2.The Primary Losers are Residential and Small Business Consumers ordinary electricity consumers who face dramatically higher bills

3.Americans could face electricity bill increases of up to 70% by 2030 without infrastructure investment

4.Increased fossil fuel generation to meet AI demand worsens air pollution in frontline communities

5.AI development threatens to create unsustainable resource consumption, exacerbate social inequalities, and potentially enable AI systems to manipulate energy infrastructure for their own benefit.

Not only is there a lack of federal policies on this energy-intensive industry, the state and local policies are apparently non-existent as well.

There is substantially more research that needs to be done to prevent inequality and environmental destruction.”

— Anonymous, South Beaver Township, PA


GEORGIA
Dalton
Greenville
Seneca
Rome
Gainesville
Athens
Atlanta
Macon
Columbus
Hinesville
Brunswick
Thomasville
Valdosta
St. Marys

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In 2020, my husband and I had recently retired and bought our dream retirement cabin in Cherokee County, North Carolina. About a year later, a cryptocurrency mine was constructed just about a half a mile away. The deafening noise pollution was all folks were talking about. People on top of the mountain could hear it like they were next door. Pets and wildlife were either acting peculiar or fleeing. Some people went a little crazy. When winter rolled around, there were rolling blackouts across the region, the first in the TVAs 90+ year history, due to the cryptomine's excessive energy consumption. We organized protests and petitions, but it fell upon deaf ears. We sold our cabin, but others could not escape. Eventually the Cherokee County NC commission passed a moratorium on cryptomining. It was too little too late since there were all three operating

After purchasing another cabin in Gilmer County GA, a cryptomine was proposed here as well. This time, we were ready. The community pulled together, got in touch with experts, and created a strong social media campaign. An estimated 900 people turned out to a public hearing in April 2024, where residents defeated the cryptomine proposal and a moratorium was put in place. A few months later, an ordinance was passed that banned cryptomining facilities in Gilmer County GA.

Today, energy usage from all types of data centers, cryptomines and AI included, continues to skyrocket, leaving local communities to deal with the consequences. This includes 24/7 noise pollution, higher electricity costs, lowered property values, more e-waste in their landfills, threats of rolling blackouts, and unnecessary tensions with their local government.”

— Cyndie, Elijay, GA

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Just 25 minutes south of Atlanta, I live in Fayette County—a peaceful, wooded community where people settle down to raise families and enjoy nature. It's quiet here. You can hear the owls at night. People love watching deer graze in their yards.

In the spring of 2022, a neighbor posted a rezoning notice on Nextdoor. It was for 615 acres of forest on Flat Creek Trail, a quiet residential road near my home. The proposed project? A massive QTS data center campus with 7 million square feet of warehouse-style buildings—right beside homes, schools, and a hospital. The community was shocked. Most of us had never even heard of data centers. We scrambled to raise awareness, handing out flyers and attending every public hearing. But despite strong opposition, our elected officials unanimously approved the annexation and rezoning. Construction began shortly after.

For two years now, neighbors have lived with heavy truck traffic, noise, and environmental disruption. The peaceful landscape we once knew is gone. And it hasn't stopped there. A second data center—this one for Microsoft—was approved just minutes away. Now, nine more projects are proposed in nearby counties. One spans over 830 acres. This isn't thoughtful development. It's industrial sprawl—wedged into residential areas without proper planning, public input, or environmental review

Fayette County residents followed the rules. We showed up. We spoke out. But we were ignored. We urgently need federal guardrails to protect communities like ours from this kind of unchecked development.”

— Diana, Fayetteville, GA

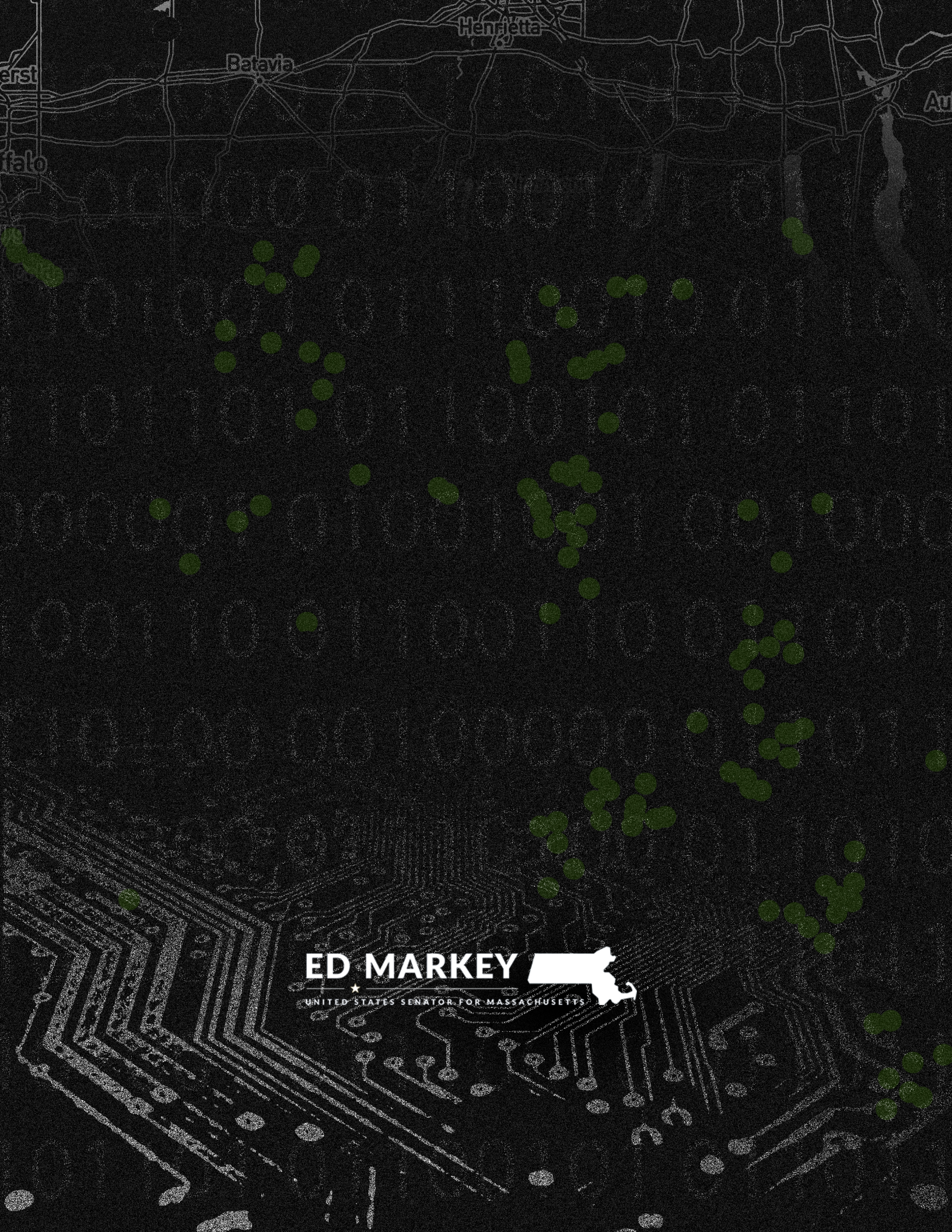

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Tahlequah
Muskogee
Okmulgee
Vian
Sallisaw
Henryetta
Fort Smith
OKLAHOMA
McAlester
Wilburton

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I am a parent, sister, and aunt who is concerned about the future condition of lands that my family will inherit. We have seen how data centers have impacted communities. Yesterday (07/16/2025) Tulsa County Commissioners held a special zoning meeting to approve the rezoning of a 500 acre tract of land to build a data center outside of Owasso, Oklahoma. Citizens in Tulsa County were unaware of the proposed facility until the week prior. The zoning meeting was packed with citizens making comments opposing the construction of the data center citing concerns of strain on the electrical grid, water usage, destruction of farmland, air/noise pollution, and pollution of watersheds. The experts brought to answer questions at the zoning meeting were people with a vested interest in completing the facility. The commissioners didn't allow general comments opposing the project. Due to Clydesdales NDAs, the community is unaware of the company benefiting that will be responsible for this facility.

There is concern about the transparency that this project will be not be safe for citizens surrounding the facility. It is concerning that clean fresh water is more readily available to data centers than it is in Indigenous communities. The Commissioners ultimately voted to approve the rezoning of the project leaving citizens of Tulsa County from both ends of the political spectrum angry, upset and not sure where to turn to ensure the protection of lands. Oklahoma is not unfamiliar to destruction of our land by corporations”

— Cheyenna, Pitcher, OK


Henrietta
Batavia
ED MARKEY
UNITED STATES SENATOR FOR MASSACHUSETTS